REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-22 and 24-32 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 10-12, 27 and 31-32 are amended by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.[1] No new matter is presented.

In the Office Action, Claims 10-11 and 31-32 were objected to; Claims 1-22 and 24-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101; and Claims 1-22 and 24-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Gennaro et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,317,834, herein Gennaro) in view of Wheeler (U.S. Pub. 2002/0026575).

The Office Action objected to Claims 10-11 and 31-32 because the term "recording medium" is not explicitly defined. In response Claims 10-11 and 31-32 are amended to recite that the "recording medium" is a "tangible storage medium," as noted in the Office Action. Support for this amendment can be found at least at Fig. 8 and p. 26, ll. 11-13 of the specification, which describes that the authentication services module may be provided on a storage medium, such as a CD-ROM.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to Claims 10-11 and 31-32 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-22 and 24-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101, as directed to non-statutory subject matter, as "not tied to an article of manufacture which would result in a practical application producing a concrete, useful and tangible result."

As an initial matter, Applicant notes that the claims are directed to statutory classes of inventions. More particularly, Claims 1 and 12 are directed to an apparatus, or device; Claims 7 and 27 are directed to a method; and Claims 10 and 31 are directed to a tangible

[1] E.g., specification, Figs. 9-12 and corresponding description.

storage medium, which are all statutory. Further, independent Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31 are amended to recite that "an authentication ticket" is generated "by combining the first user information item and the second user information item based on the predetermined identification data," and the generated ticket is "transmitted to a computer remote from the information providing device via a network." Support for these features can be found at least at Figs. 1, and 9-12, and their corresponding description in the specification. Thus, Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31, as amended, produce a concrete, useful and tangible result.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1-22 and 24-32 under 35 U.S.C. §101 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-22 and 24-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Gennaro in view of Wheeler. In response to this rejection, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Amended independent Claim 1 recites, in part, an information providing device comprising:

> a provider association unit... comprising:
> ...a third unit configured to generate an authentication ticket including data indicating at least one of an authentication provider name, a term of validity of the ticket, an authentication domain name, and user attributes by combining the first user information item and the second user information item based on the predetermined identification data...

Independent Claims 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31, while directed to alternative embodiments, are amended to recite similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of independent Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31.

As described in an exemplary embodiment at pp. 27-45 and Figs. 9-12 of the specification, an authentication ticket is generated including the parameters listed in either Fig. 10 or 11, based on a combination of the first and second user information items. This

authentication ticket is then transmitted to the client, or remote terminal, for subsequent authentication processing to gain access to applications and/or data.

Turning to the applied primary reference, Gennaro describes a user authentication method (Fig. 4B) which uses a user identifier 28, a password 30, and a biometric sample 32 to grant a user 26 access to a database.

Gennaro, however, fails to teach or suggest "generat[ing] an authentication ticket including data indicating at least one of an authentication provider name, a term of validity of the ticket, an authentication domain name, and user attributes by combining the first user information item and the second user information item," as recited in independent Claim 1.

More particularly, in Gennaro's method, the user enters the personal identifier 28, which is used to retrieve an encrypted biometric record 33. The user 26 then enters a password 30 that is used to create a decryption key 31, which is used to decrypt the encrypted biometric record 33. Finally, a submitted biometric sample 32 is compared to the decrypted biometric record 40, and a sufficiently high statistical equivalence results in granting the user 26 access to the database. Thus, the end result of the processing in Gennaro is a statistical equivalence result that is judged against a threshold to determine if a user is granted access, not an authentication ticket including any of the features defined in amended Claim 1.

In rejecting the features directed to "outputting a unified information item..." created by combining the first and second user information items, the Office Action relies on col. 8, ll. 37-47 of Gennaro. This cited portion of Gennaro describes that a statistical equivalence score is generated from the comparison of a provided biometric model with the decrypted biometric model. A decision is then made to determine if the computed score is acceptable. If not, the user's authorization status is declared as "failed," otherwise, an acceptable score will result in granting the individual access.

Thus, the cited portion of Gennaro merely describes generating a statistical score based on the comparison between an actually biometric sample and a biometric model, and granting or denying user authorization on the basis of this score. This statistical score is clearly not the same as "an authentication ticket including data indicating at least one of an authentication provider name, a term of validity of the ticket, an authentication domain name, and user attributes," as recited in independent Claim 1. More particularly, the information provided in the authorization ticket may be used for various authorization processes, as described in the specification. On the other hand, the score generated by Gennaro is merely compared against a threshold to determine if a user is granted access, and does not define any of the attributes of the authentication ticket, as outlined in amended Claim 1.

Wheeler, the secondary reference, is relied upon only to reject feature that have been omitted from the independent claims by the present amendment. Further, Wheeler fails to remedy any of the above noted deficiencies of Gennaro.

Therefore, Gennaro and Wheeler, neither alone, nor in combination, teach or suggest "generat[ing] an authentication ticket including data indicating at least one of an authentication provider name, a term of validity of the ticket, an authentication domain name, and user attributes by combining the first user information item and the second user information item," as recited in independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 1 (and the claims that depend therefrom under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn. For substantially similar reasons, it is also submitted that independent Claims 7, 10, 12, 27 and 31 (and the claims that depend therefrom) patentably define over Gennaro and Wheeler.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-22 and 24-32 is definite and patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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